

*Right to Clean Vehicles Act grants states the right to reduce vehicle emissions*

Washington, DC - Rep. Peter Welch (VT-AL) and Rep. Brad Sherman (CA-27), along with 58 co-sponsors, announced the introduction of legislation today to overturn the recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) decision to deny California's request for a waiver to adopt stricter automobile emissions standards.

Welch and Sherman are the lead sponsors of the legislation.

Welch said, "The Environmental Protection Agency's decision defied the science, defied the states, and defied common sense. With consumers feeling the pinch of record fuel prices and the evidence of global warming overwhelming, the Bush administration must lead, follow, or get out of the way."

With record high fuel prices and the scientific evidence of global warming overwhelming, the Right to Clean Vehicles Act will immediately grant California's Clean Air Act waiver request, giving an additional twelve states the authority to implement tailpipe emission standards.

Earlier this year, Senator Barbara Boxer (CA) introduced similar legislation in the U.S. Senate, which was sponsored by Vermont's Sens. Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders.

The EPA denied California's waiver request on December 19, 2007 after considering it since 2005.

In September, Welch rallied 89 members of Congress to urge the EPA to promptly grant California a waiver to adopt stricter emissions standards, allowing other states to follow its lead. Earlier in the year, Welch led a successful effort in Congress to block a proposal being considered by the House Energy and Commerce Committee that would have prohibited states like Vermont from adopting auto emission standards that are tougher than those imposed by the federal government.

The twelve states waiting for the EPA waiver include Connecticut, Maryland, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. The Governors of Arizona, Colorado, Florida and Utah have also committed to the standards.